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SUBJECT: DELHI DIARY, JUNE 28-JULY 5

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Joel Ehrendreich for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶11. (U) Below is a compilation of political highlights from Embassy New Delhi for June 28-July 5, 2007 that did not feature in our other reporting, including:

-- SAARC Protocol on Trafficking Likely
-- Mayawati Lays Out Her Priorities

SAARC Protocol on Trafficking Likely

¶12. (SBU) Media is reporting that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries will, for the first time, work toward a protocol for rescue and repatriation of victims. The SAARC regional taskforce is expected to recognize cross-border trafficking as a burgeoning problem and create something similar to the SAARC Convention of 2002 on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution. The meeting is scheduled for July 24-27 and will be attended by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of External Affairs and UNICEF.

¶13. (SBU) COMMENT: Close Embassy non-governmental organization contact Bachpan Bachao Andolan has been pushing for inclusion of child and forced labor in the SAARC for years. If adopted, this is another success for NGOs working on child labor issues. In addition, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) released a report on July 3 stating a National Database on Mission Children is being launched and will be monitored by the NHRC. END COMMENT.

Mayawati Lays Out Her Priorities

¶14. (C) On June 29, Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister Mayawati presented her budget on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. It was the largest budget in the history of the state and laid out an ambitious agenda focusing on infrastructure development and the social sector. Mayawati urged the private and public sectors to join together to address the state's urgent infrastructure needs and pledged to meet a target of 10 percent economic growth. Most infrastructure projects are to be located in villages,

including the construction of link roads, rural electrification, the installation of hand pumps and underground drainage systems. A separate program will upgrade urban infrastructure. A third priority will be energy development, including reform of the energy sector, cutting power theft, and the construction of new power plants. In the education sector, the UP government has pledged to provide scholarships to deserving students from the "backward classes."

¶5. (C) Mayawati won an absolute majority in the just-concluded elections by promising to address law and order problems and the chronic poverty that have long plagued UP. Having already hit the entrenched mafias and thoroughly cleansed the state police force, she now appears bent on taking concrete steps to spur the long-moribund economy. The previous government of Mulayam Singh Yadav did little or nothing in the development area and proved unable to spend more than a tiny fraction of state revenue, which continued to pile up in the treasury. Unable or unwilling to embark on serious development projects, Mulayam's Samajwadi Party government tried to give the money away by announcing cash payments to students graduating from secondary school and to girls getting married. Much of the budgeted money simply disappeared. The only jarring note in Mayawati's budget was her dedication of large sums to construct a Dalit museum and maintain a large "memorial garden" built in memory of a Dalit leader in the state capital. In addition to a penchant for efficiency and autocracy, Mayawati continues to press a lavish personality cult. Lucknow has been festooned with giant pictures of Mayawati along with her sayings and promises.

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